DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 332 283 EA 022 444

AUTHOR Zsiray, Stephen W., Jr.; Peterson, Holly
TITLE Developing a Peer Tutoring Program for Year-Round Education.
PUB DATE Nov 90
NOTE 11p.; Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Middle School Association (Long Beach, CA, November 14-17, 1990).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cross Age Teaching; Elementary Secondary Education; *Extended School Year; Extracurricular Activities; Learning Experience; Middle Schools; *Peer Teaching; Program Evaluation; School Schedules; Student Participation; Tutoring; *Vacation Programs; *Year Round Schools
IDENTIFIERS Utah

ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes an effective peer tutoring program used in both elementary and middle school programs in the Cache School District (North Logan, Utah). In year-round education programs, students have off-track time during the school year at four different intervals. This time is often utilized by school districts to give students additional educational experiences. The formal name given to the off-track program is intersession. The authors describe a peer tutoring program that has given middle school students the opportunity to return to elementary school settings and work with younger children in a variety of capacities ranging from reading aloud to groups of children, working in one-on-one tutorial situations, to correcting papers. In addition, at the middle school level peer tutors can work with students during intersession times who are in need of remediation in the core subjects as well as assist teachers in various classroom assignments. To date, 182 students have participated in the program. (Author)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED322283

Developing a Peer Tutoring Program for Year-Round Education

A paper presented to the National Middle School Association Annual Conference - November 15, 1990 Long Beach, California

by

Stephen W. Zsiray, Jr.
Assistant Superintendent

and

Holly Peterson
Principal, Spring Creek Middle School

Cache School District
North Logan, Utah 84321

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
S. Zsiray, Jr.
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Abstract

This paper summarizes an effective peer tutoring program used in both elementary and middle school programs in the Cache School District. In year-round education programs, students have off-track time during the school year at four different intervals. This time is often utilized by school districts to give students additional educational experiences. The formal name given to the off-track program is intersession. The authors describe a peer tutoring program that has given middle school students the opportunity to return to elementary school settings and work with younger children in a variety of capacities ranging from reading aloud to groups of children, working in one-on-one tutorial situations, to correcting papers. In addition, at the middle school level peer tutors can work with students during intersession times who are in need of remediation in the core subjects as well as assist teachers in various classroom assignments. To date, 182 students have participated in the program.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EA 022 444

Introduction

Recent numbers indicate that nationally 37 middle schools serving 50,000 children are in year-round education programs (National Association of Year-Round Education, 1990). In the fall of 1989, the Cache County School District Board of Education, North Logan, Utah, initiated a year -round education program at the middle school level. During the 1989-90 school year, two middle schools were scheduled on a 45-15 year-round education program. Two additional schools were added in 1990-91. Presently, four thousand students participate in the year-round program. Briefly, most year-round middle schools are on a 45-15, 60-20, or some similar pattern. In the 45-15 program, students go to school for 45 days and then leave school for 15 days. In year-round terminology the 15 days are referred to as moving off-track time.

A very detailed planning and development effort was undertaken to provide an exploratory program for middle school students who were off-track. During the four 15 day periods over the course of the school year when students are not in a formal school setting, an intersession program was developed to enhance and extend the exploratory nature of the middle school experience. Students are able to participate in wide variety of recreational and intellectually stimulating experiences. This formal type of program is identified by the year-round education literature as an intersession program. Blendinger and Jahelka (1975) described two critical factors necessary for successful intersession programs: an enthusiastic

instructional staff, and a strong community-orientated commitment to the success of the program. The intersession program has met with a high acceptance rate by both elementary and middle school teachers. Parents have also enthusiastically supported the elements of the program. To date, fifty-two parents have volunteered in some capacity to help with the operation of the program.

The intersession programs have helped these very active early adolescents channel their energy into a rich exploratory experience. In addition, a child that participates in the program will, in essence, experience an extension to the traditional school year. In households where both parents are working, the intersession program provides organized activities for the young adolescents during the day while parents are not home. In a recent study of eighth grade students, it was reported that students left at home for longer than three hours were 'at risk' of failing or dropping out of school. Presently, 14% of eighth graders nationally fall under this category (U.S. Department of Education, 1990). The teachers, administrators, and parents are commited to providing a rich variety of intersession programs to try and reduce this situation of middle school students spending long hours at home with no structure.

Peer Tutoring Program

One very successful element of the intersession program is the peer tutoring program. The peer tutoring program is comprised of two components: (1) middle school students working together, and (2) cross-

age peer tutoring where middle school students go into the elementary schools and work with students in grades K-5.

Greenwood, Cart, and Hall (1988) in a review of peer tutoring strategies report that peer tutoring has clearly demonstrated to be an effective alternative classroom procedure across a number of different aspects. These are:

1. Tutors as well as tutees benefit academically.
2. Classroom behavior problems are reduced as peer teaching, cooperation, and academic behaviors increase.
3. Tutoring has been demonstrated to be cost-effective compared to alternatives such as computer-assisted instruction, increasing learning time and reducing class size.
4. Peer tutoring has been shown to improve relations between students with and without disabilities.
5. Sociometric measures of peer affiliation improve with the implementation of peer strategies.
6. Students attitudes and self-concepts improve when peer procedures are in place.

These six elements have been observed to exist by teachers who have observed students who have participated in the program. In addition, quantitiative data is presently being collected to support these contentions.

Organization of the program

Students who are interested in becoming a peer tutor fill out an application form. The form is available at the each of the middle and elementary schools in the school district. A sample of the form is illustrated in Figure 1.

Cache School District Intersession Programs
Peer Tutor and/or School Aid Application

Name _____ Phone # _____
Last First

Address _____
Street City

I would like to work at: _____
Name of School

I would like to tutor in these areas (please check):
❒ Language Arts ❒ Math ❒ Social Studies ❒ Science ❒ Other _____

I would like to work in the:
❒ School Office ❒ Library Media Center ❒ Cafeteria ❒ Other _____

I am willing to donate my intersession time as indicated above:

_____
Applicant Signature

I will support my child in this program and I will make arrangements for transportation.

_____
Parent/Guardian Signature

Figure 1. Peer tutor application form.

The forms are turned in one week prior to the student going off-track. They are then distributed to either the elementary or middle school principals. The principals take the information and try to match student and teacher needs. Students are then contacted by the principal of the school. Transportation is a very simple process for those students opting to go to an elementary school, as these schools are in each of the major communities served by the school district. Students can walk or ride bicycles to school. Those students wanting to participate at the middle school level ride the bus, when space is available, or the parent provides the transportation. Usually an appointment is set-up for the child to come to the elementary school one afternoon after school the week prior to starting the program. The principal provides the student with an overview of program, discusses the responsibilities and rules of the school, identifies the assignment for the child, and then introduces the child to the teacher. The teacher then spends time reviewing her needs and expectations of the peer tutor. After the student passes through this screening, the child is ready to begin the program. When the child arrives at the elementary school the first day of intersession, he checks-in at the school office and then reports to the teacher. He is usually greeted by the principal who pins a "peer tutor" button on his shirt. Observations of the peer tutors in the elementary settings have verified that many appear to have a good feeling of self-esteem and identity. This verifies Elkund's (1984) work on psychological stress and identity in which he identified the need for the adolescent to begin to develop a healthy sense of self in forming an integrated sense of identity. It

seems that they feel very secure in their 'old' school and they appear to be very comfortable in this environment. Peer tutors are recognized by the elementary students as teacher aides and by students as important classroom helpers. The case below (Figure 2) illustrates a personal observation made by one of the co-authors on how this program has influenced his children.

> One afternoon this summer I happened to observe my child playing school with some of the neighborhood children who were in the second grade age range. I watched the teacher (my son) give some math problems to the other children and they were busily working with paper and pencil. My four year old daughter was roaming around the group of children marking checks on the papers. I asked the teacher what Jennifer was doing and he said: "she wanted to play with us so we made her our peer tutor."

Figure 2. Children at play emulate the classroom environment.

Recognizing the accomplishments of these students is very critical to the success of the program. When students successfully participate in the program for the entire intersession period they are recognized with a certificate. Further, they also become eligible for the Adventurers Club. If they participate in the intersession program

throughout the school year, a student, as a member of the Adventurers Club, will participate in a special outing at the end of the school year.

Review of Program

In a recent survey given to teachers who have participated in the program, useful information was collected to help refine the process. The results of four of the key questions asked of teachers will be reported.

1. How many students have participated in the program?

   Total = 182 **Boys = 45** **Girls = 137**

2. How many teachers have participated in the program?

   Teachers = 88

3. How was the peer tutor used?

Academic - Reading

- listened to programmed reading
- listened to readers
- read to students
- helped with reading groups
- helped children select books in the library media center
- helped students with assignments
- group and individual spelling
- worked with sight word recognition
- worked with students on the computer helping with the word processor

Academic - Mathematics and Computers

- worked with students on the computer helping with drill and practice exercises
- working with small groups in math
- worked one-on-one with students in math skills - computation and flash cards

Academic - other

- helped students with art work
- helped students in PE with fitness tests

Teacher assistant - classroom

- stapled papers
- run-off materials
- marked books
- straightened shelves
- checked in/out books
- counted papers
- record grades
- mend pages in books
- covered books

4. Suggestions for improving the program?

- some students did not consistently come to school, we may want to consider additional means of selection
- we need to make sure the child wanted the assignment because if they didn't they would not return to school
- work out some additional incentives for the peer tutors
- it's up to the teachers to make it work, we have eager students
- maybe we need to set number limitations on participation

Further, of the 182 students who have participated in the program, 121 (two-thirds) have returned to the program for more than one intersession.

Conclusion

Intersession programs have the potential to give young adolescents the opportunity to explore and engage in many learning experiences. The peer tutoring project has been successful in giving middle school students an opportunity to develop skills in self-esteem, socialization, and communications. It is interesting to observe these students in action. They enjoy their interactions with others, they feel important, and they seem to exude a high level of confidence. The peer tutoring program gives the middle school child a sense of purpose and identity to help this child to better cope with the physiological and intellectual changes they will face in their middle school years.

References cited

Blendinger, J. & Jahelka, R. 1975. Managing the middle school intersession, Middle School Journal, v.4,n.5., pp. 20-22.

Elkund, D. 1984. All grown up and no place to go. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Greenwood, C.R., Cart, J.J., & R.V. Hall. 1988. The use of peer tutoring strategies in classroom management and educational instruction, School Psychology Review, v.17,n.2., pp. 258-275.

National Association of Year-Round Education. 1990. National reference directory of year-round education programs for the 1989-90 school year. San Diego: Naational Association for Year-Round Education.

U.S. Education Department - National Center for Education Statistics. 1990. National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.